

FAMILY LIFE IN JAPAN



TOURIST LIBRARY: 17

FAMILY LIFE IN JAPAN

TOURIST LIBRARY

Volumes already published

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. TEA CULT OF JAPAN | By Y. Fukukita, A. B. |
| 2. JAPANESE NOH PLAYS | By Prof. T. Nogami |
| 3. SAKURA (Japanese Cherry) | By M. Miyoshi, D. Sc. |
| 4. JAPANESE GARDENS | By Prof. M. Tatsui |
| 5. HIROSHIGE AND JAPANESE
LANDSCAPES | By Prof. Yone Noguchi |
| 6. JAPANESE DRAMA | By B. T. I. |
| 7. JAPANESE ARCHITECTURE | By Prof. H. Kishida, D. Sc. |
| 8. WHAT IS SHINTO? | By Prof. G. Katō, D. Litt. |
| 9. CASTLES IN JAPAN | By Prof. S. Ōrui, D. Litt.
and Prof. M. Toba |
| 10. HOT SPRINGS IN JAPAN | By Prof. K. Fujinami, M. D. |
| 11. FLORAL ART OF JAPAN | By Issōtei Nishikawa |
| 12. CHILDREN'S DAYS IN JAPAN | By T. Iwadō, M. A. |
| 13. KIMONO (Japanese Dress) | By Kenichī Kawakatsu |
| 14. JAPANESE FOOD | By Prof. Kaneko Tezuka |
| 15. JAPANESE MUSIC | By Katsumi Sunaga |
| 16. JUDO (JUJUTSU) | By Prof. Jigorō Kanō |
| 17. FAMILY LIFE IN JAPAN | By Shunkichi Akimoto |

Volumes in preparation

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| SCENERY OF JAPAN | By T. Tamura, D. Sc. |
| JAPANESE EDUCATION | By Prof. K. Yoshida, D. Litt.
and Prof. T. Kaigo |
| FOLK-TOYS IN JAPAN | By Tekiho Nishizawa |
| FLORAL CALENDAR IN JAPAN | By T. Makino, D. Sc.
and Genjirō Oka |
| UKIYOE (Japanese Genre Picture) | By Prof. S. Fujikake D. Litt. |
| HOW TO STUDY BUDDHIST
STATUE | By Prof. G. Ono, D. Litt. |
| JAPANESE HISTORY | By Prof. T. Nakamura, D. Litt. |



CHILDREN GREET NEW YEAR

FAMILY LIFE IN JAPAN

BY
SHUNKICHI AKIMOTO



BOARD OF TOURIST INDUSTRY
JAPANESE GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS

COPYRIGHT 1937

EDITORIAL NOTE

It is a common desire among tourists to learn something of the culture of the countries they visit, as well as to see their beautiful scenery. To see is naturally easier than to learn, but flying visits merely for sightseeing furnish neither the time nor opportunity for more than a passing acquaintance with the culture of any foreign people. This is specially true of Japan and her people.

The Board of Tourist Industry recognizes both the obligation and the difficulty of providing foreign tourists with accurate information regarding the various phases of Japan's culture. It is, therefore, endeavouring to meet this obligation, as far as possible, by publishing this series of brochures.

The present series will, when completed, consist of more than a hundred volumes, each dealing with a different subject, but all co-ordinated. By studying the entire series, the foreign student of Japan will gain an adequate knowledge of the unique culture that has evolved in this country through the ages.

Board of Tourist Industry,
Japanese Government Railways.

EDITORIAL NOTE

The Board of Tourist Industry
acknowledges with sincere gratitude
its indebtedness to the Shufunotomo
and the Tokyo Nichinichi which so
generously helped to provide the
photographs shown in this brochure.
(The cover photograph: Y. Watanabe)

CONTENTS

	Page
Introductory	9
The Wife	12
The Husband	20
Children	26
The Mother-in-law	38
The Japanese Homestead	45
Moral Background of Japanese Home	55
Sunday Morning in Japanese Home	61
Making Presents	78



New Year's decorations before the entrance of a Japanese house

INTRODUCTORY

Japanese women are going out more and more, just as Japanese men are staying at home more and more. This is one of the most notable phenomena of present-day Japan. Thirty or forty years ago, before the Sino-Japanese War was fought or before Japan was recognized as a world Power, ladies walking abroad by themselves were rare. They were exclusively domestic creatures, clinging vines of the home-tree, just as men were out-of-the-home animals. This was one landmark dividing the men and women of the other day. As in the old nursery story, he went out to work on the farm while she stayed at home to do her washing.

Our men once prided themselves on being the lords of creation, but the women took care that their lords stayed out of the home and exercised as little of their sovereignty there as possible. Men left home early in the morning, stayed away till late in the afternoon, and returned under the starry sky, very tired in body and mind. Were there entertainment to be given or received, much of it was arranged outside the home, in restaurants and in tea-houses, with professional caterers to take care of both host and guests. It was the same with most other social functions in which men were chiefly concerned. Thus the home stood self-protected from the outside world, while the so-called autocrat of the home was a sort of revered robot, supposed to have all authority but actually know-



Peaceful holiday in the country

ing little about how things were being managed at home.

This order of things has somewhat changed. With their general "awakening," women began slowly and steadily, and, now quite irrevocably, to take part in the active life of the world, hitherto believed to be man's exclusive sphere, and to mingle with men in work and play to an ever-increasing degree. As women have learned thus to understand and appreciate men's life outside the home, both in its amenities and its stern realities, so also have men learned to understand and appreciate the home life hitherto exclusively controlled by women. In other words, they have seen each other in a new light at home and abroad, and have begun to reconstruct their home on the basis of this new re-discovery of each other. The

Japanese home today is, therefore, a new creation, born from the womb of old Japan, and fostered in the genial light of new Japan. It is in the transition stage, awaiting the future to bring a more complete development.

In trying to present a bird's-eye view of the Japanese home as it stands, the best way will be to examine its component parts, dealing with them separately, and then take a general survey of the whole scene. We shall close this introduction with a word of warning about the words "old and new Japan"—a distinction often made with but hazy understanding. Old Japan has not quite passed, nor is new Japan as yet the universally prevalent aspect of the country. In some respects, old Japan remains as potent as in the mid-Tokugawa régime, and in others new Japan reigns supreme, while in still others the old and new are mixed in a strange, but not inharmonious, blending. For illustration, take the following three homes: Firstly, a home made by man and wife, both with very conservative parents, probably from the same provincial town. Secondly, a home made by man and wife, city-born and city-bred in the modernistic environment of a great metropolis. Thirdly, a home made by the scion of a conservative family married to an ultra-modern girl, brought up among the glittering fashions of urban civilization, or vice versa. In the first you will see nothing but old Japan, in the second new Japan, and in the third the old and new in picturesque compound. Which of them is happiest would be hard to say. Suffice it to state that there are these and other varieties of home, and that the key to happiness is in the persons concerned rather than in the constitution of the home.

THE WIFE

First, we shall take the woman, as she plays pre-eminently the leading rôle on the stage of the home. She appears in the three characters of daughter, wife and mother.

The Japanese daughter of old was brought up with several restrictions on her freedom. She was taught the triple-obedience doctrine: Obedience to parents when young, obedience to husband when married, and obedience to children when old. This may sound to modern ears as a barbarously one-sided way of treating women. But it was only a "modest" and "womanly" way of expressing it.

Every dogma may be made to appear gentle or hard according to the manner in which it is worded. It may be expressed in terms of threat, of command, hope or supplication. Again, there are active and passive sides; when one is told to give, one is also told to receive, for everyone else is included in the same advice. You may soften the triple-obedience doctrine into something like this: When young, the daughter may let her parents do all the worrying about her education and her marriage, and after marriage she will still continue to possess her soul in quiet, letting her parents-in-law and her husband do all the worrying about the duties and responsibilities of the home life, but in the maturity of her womanhood she may assume the management of the home life as queen over all



Physical jerks at 7 a.m. "Every day, in every way, we are getting physically fitter and fitter."

young and old. In short, she is to be humble and modest when young and to be wise and to lead when older—that is all. She was spared the trouble about hunting after sweethearts with a view to marriage. Her parents, her relatives, all her family friends and neighbours did this for her. A good, marriageable daughter was no more to be concealed than a cherry tree in blossom, nor was her nature or character.

Married to the House

The first object of marriage was to stay married, not to get divorced when the couple got tired of each other. Every provision was made to keep the two together, to prevent separation, even if one became tired of the other. Married couples were taught to regard their union as the inevitable dictate of fate, good or bad. You may ask: What if one party was really tired of the other? The answer is that there was no need for one to get really tired of the other. For, if love grew out of marriage, as it generally did, well and good, but if not, no matter, as the wife was married more to the household of the husband than to the husband himself. One of the first and most important functions which the bride, on entering the house of her future husband, performed was to kneel before the family shrine and report, so to speak, to the souls of his ancestors that she had just joined the group, for good or for ill. It was tantamount to saying that she had from now on become an integral part of the house, which was the main thing, and that her new life began there—with in the rôle of wife, which was secondary. So, if the husband did not prove to be as loving as was expected,

she must take him as a necessary evil, like a leaky kettle, and make the most of it, finding solace in the care of her children. On the husband's part, if he did not find his wife quite to his liking, he could still maintain her in the place of the first woman of the house.

If the husband died, the wife often remained in the house like Ruth, who said to her mother-in-law: "Whither thou goest, I will go, where thou diest, I will die, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." The good fortune which befell Ruth in the end often befell a Japanese widow of old, who, for one reason or another, had led an unhappy married life. Generally speaking, however, the married couple of other days did find their mutual conditions adjusted in due course of time without having recourse to divorce or separation. As the wife grew in years, she increased in influence also, until she became Lady Paramount, thoroughly identified with the name and prestige of the house—a position from which nothing on earth could dislodge her so long as she played her part of the game.

As Grandmother

If bound by the triple-obedience doctrine, the Japanese wife of old was exempted from the burden of compulsory education now borne by girls and boys. Education, in its present conception, was deemed unnecessary for her. She was a regular Joan of Arc who knew how to spin and sew to perfection, but was barely able to read and write the easiest form of script. There were polite accomplishments for women, such as the art of arranging flowers, tea ceremony, composing *waka* (short poems), but



"A word in your ear, grandma!"



"Some wax out of yours, grandson!"

these were cultivated chiefly by daughters of the middle and upper-middle classes, i. e. young ladies. The average woman must depend on her experience, force of character and womanly intuition to prove her mettle as the lifelong partner of her husband and as mistress of the house, and in her age as mother and grandmother of a host of progeny. Such a woman, or the remnants of such, may still be met with everywhere in the Empire. She is the grandmother of the young wife of today, perhaps close on eighty or more, and in some cases still wielding her puissant tongue, helping in the administration of a large home, or even a busy commercial establishment, her tact, vision and knowledge of the world not a whit beclouded. She is the *genrō* (senior governor) of the house.

The Modern Daughter

But here we are concerned more with the granddaughter than the grandmother. Now listen to our young lady's complaints and boasts. She has to learn a great deal more than did her grandmother. The world has grown more complex and civilized; women have been made free but self-reliant. Her place in the world is almost equal to that of a boy and she has to adjust herself to her changed or advanced place in the world.

All this is too true. Indeed, she has had to go through the compulsory school education just as does a boy, and then go on with higher education in the Girls' High School, which once on a time was "advanced" but which now is only part of the education of the average girl, hardly adequate for one whose mission in life is to help one's husband to get on in the world. No longer is she ex-

pected to become a doll bride. She must be a miracle of self-help and efficiency and, withal, of feminine attractiveness. Adequate as a kitchen maid, delicate as a lady, she must have a steady head for driving bargains and for not being cheated. All of which requires training not only of mind, but a good deal of actual experience. She must digest untold numbers of magazine stories and lectures, read all sorts of literature, current and classical, must go out often, mix with people, male and female, visit shows, cinemas and attend parties, taking in as much knowledge of the world as possible while she is free, unattached.

School for Brides

It is to help young ladies to gain such an outlook on life that the so-called Bride School has come into existence. Its avowed object is to produce an ideal wife—that is, a good wife and a sagacious mother—in whom the pick of qualities making for the best woman of the new and old Japan types shall be combined. The Girls' High School is thought to fall short of the proper standard, and as for the Girls' University, it may be considered by some as a little too much of the blue stocking variety, while others may think that such learned ladies are doubtless very suitable in their place, but that their place is not in the home where cooking has to be done and darning of the husband's stockings . . . which are not of the blue-coloured variety. Hence the Bride School. In its curriculum are included nearly all the accomplishments deemed essential to the wife of a superior male and the mistress of an affluent and well-regulated household. Sewing, knitting and cooking, the science of household economy, the art of flower

arrangement, tea ceremony, *waka* composition, music, dancing and foreign languages are among the lessons included, some of them optional or given to special classes.

You may now form a rough idea of what an ideal Japanese bride must be, or is supposed to be. She has had the benefit of the Girls' High School as a matter of course, and at the same time some domestic discipline at the hands of her elder relatives, brought up, we shall suppose, in the honourable traditions of an ancient, well-to-do family. To this has been added all that the best of the Bride School could impart, and she stands confessed a marriageable girl in all her bloom and sweetness. She is able to read and write, her handwriting being as beautiful as that of the best-educated male or female, able to talk in company, to give and receive messages by post or telephone in all the transactions of daily life as efficiently as a regular office clerk, able to do book-keeping as well as house-keeping, to decorate the interior of the house, to be an efficient hostess and a graceful guest, and she may embellish her letters, if necessary, with poetic effusions. On top of all this, she has managed to pick up, thanks to the extra tuition of the Bride School, a smattering of a foreign language and the capacity to appreciate foreign music, being no mean dancer herself.

If, with all these accomplishments, she happens to have a pretty face and graceful figure, she is well nigh perfect as a candidate for happy and prosperous matrimony. In age she will be nearer twenty than fifteen, or possibly a little above the twenty line, and this you could hardly have helped, though her grandmother might have hinted that she was getting too old for marriage.

THE HUSBAND

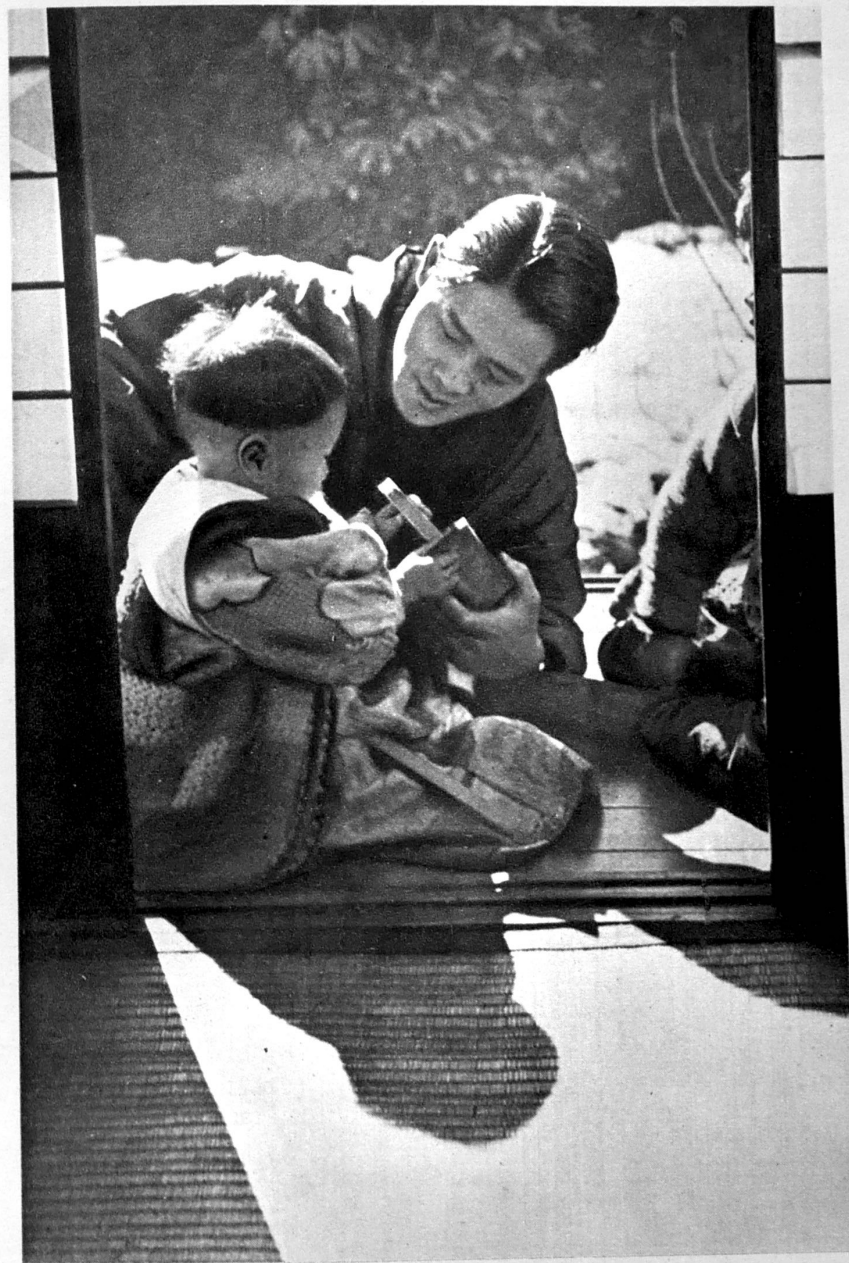
One may naturally wonder what would be the qualities of the young man who will claim such a paragon for his wife. Our young men nowadays seem to have an extremely high standard for the qualities of the girls they are willing to marry. Not a whit surprised at the array of angelic qualities spread before them, they might go a step further and hint that the girls would have suited them better if they had been rich into the bargain.

Now, we shall examine the conditions of the young man supposed to be on the look-out for an eligible partner in marriage. The loosening of old family ties, following the liberalization of government and the consequent triumph of democratic and equalitarian principles, has had an unexpected reaction upon the social outlook of young people. What they are gaining in liberty and individual freedom, in opportunities for learning and advancement, for pleasure and luxury, they are losing in the terrible growth in the competition for life's honours, even for bare existence.

Abolition of Age

One outstanding cause is the abolition of old age. In these days of perennial youth, our old men and old women are forgetting to die off.

Not only do they presume to live beyond the allotted span of existence, such as it was considered to be once, but they refuse to "retire." If you remind them politely



Threshold of life and home



"Women must work while men must play"

that they are getting too old for active business, they don't believe you. In the good old days of feudal *daimyō*, men after forty and women after thirty used to think of themselves as old and no longer fit for the battles of life; and to think of "retiring" in favour of their sons and daughters-in-law, and thenceforward to cherish no more ambition in life than to make pilgrimages to Buddhist temples or play with the grandchildren. They obediently listened to the superior counsels of their children.

Now that the new era of enlightenment has set the aged free, they constitute a positive menace to the rising generation. They cast a shadow on the quality of filial piety. Even the Government has long since recognized the need of checking this perpetual continuation on life's stage of these emancipated semi-immortals. Thus it was that the age limit of sixty or thereabouts was set on the service of men in public employment to compel their retirement whether they wished it or not. If left alone, they will not only stick to their jobs until seventy, but may even cast an eye of desire on damsels of twenty, thereby making themselves serious rivals to the rising generation in the fields alike of business, pleasure and love. Instead of filial piety, parental piety must be taught! In the eyes of the rising generation this survival of old persons constitutes a great social and moral problem.

To be able to hold up their heads beside the growing number of these aged rivals on the one hand, and on the other to compete successfully with the swelling tide of a still younger generation pushing from behind, they have to work for all they are worth. Even to go through the Middle School is no joke; it costs money and much hard

study, plus fair native brains. But that is a mere nothing; no girl will look at a Middle School graduate. He must go up to and through the University, and, for choice, one of the Imperial Universities, or else possess some quality considered to be its equivalent, that is, superior business talent, a gift in art, or the possession of personal wealth.

Battle of Life

There was a time when their father's name or money meant much in advancing their careers or business opportunities, but that has been reduced almost to zero point. In these days of spreading democratic ideas the fields of human endeavour are increasingly controlled by the principles of a fair field and no favour. Young men, whatever their jobs or aspirations, must make good for themselves; otherwise they get no honour, no living, no wife, no happiness. They must put their shoulders to the wheel and push with all their might or fall behind and perish in the gutter. They must trudge up and up, on all fours, panting, blowing and bleeding, and many are they, poor victims, who drop by the way and die, gasping in the mire. The number who drop out in this race of life is increasing year after year!

In these days when men of seventy and eighty are rushing about in search of profit and pleasure, men in their twenties are mere babies. Not till they are nearing the thirty line and beginning to acquire some proficiency in the type of work they have chosen are they considered old enough or ready enough to talk about marriage. Even then, their capacity to maintain themselves and their wives in comfort and to bring up children will be seriously

discussed before prospective parents-in-law will be found willing to give their daughters in marriage.

Little wonder that most young would-be husbands should postpone the date of their marriage or talk about the impossibility of an independent home life—a complaint which is echoed in the similar lamentations of young women about finding suitable mates in marriage.

Love Marriage

In this dilemma a part solution seems to have been discovered in a new bond based on the principles of mutual helpfulness of the fifty-fifty variety. Where both high contracting parties are willing to go the half way in overcoming the difficulty, the woman offering to work in one capacity or another, or helping in the household drudgery, thereby supplementing the husband's income or increasing the economic value of the same income, and the man cutting down the expenses of his bachelor days, then there is a possibility of a happy home life that otherwise would be impossible. In this respect, our young men are extremely fortunate, for Japanese women are generally invested with the traditional virtues of industry, economy and self-effacement, which enable them to make a small income go a long way. It accounts in part for the continued increase of marriages, even in these difficult years, especially those love marriages contracted by valorous and romantic lovers minus parental blessings. At the same time, bachelors and spinsters are increasing.

This variety in the constitution of the Japanese home permits one to point to it as the very type and exemplification of the model Japanese foyer.

CHILDREN

“What is the use of a book without pictures?” asked Alice. In the same strain of wistful longing will every Japanese ask: “What is the use of a home without children?”

No Japanese home can be a home, sweet home without children. It has been so from time immemorial, as we shall presently see. There is something in the Japanese love of children that is transcendental, mysterious. It amounts to an adoration, a worship, even a religion itself. It is a native quality, born and developed on Japanese soil. Most other qualities now identified with the Japanese character probably had their origin in foreign countries. Filial piety, for instance, was taught by Confucius long before the Christian Era and was implanted in Japan long before the 8th century. Buddhism came a little later. But of this more anon.

Even a casual visitor to these shores will be struck by the large measure of indulgence allowed the children both in and out of the home. Most of the so-called popular festivals, and nearly all the domestic observances and festivities, are given in honour of or for the sake of children. The five famous festivals occur to the mind at once: New Year celebrations in January, Girls' Festival of March 3, the Boys' Festival of May 5, Star Festival of July 7, and the Chrysanthemum Festival of September 9.

It is true that adults played no mean part in these festivals. The samurai paid congratulatory visits on these



As one doll to another . . .



Young samurai admire old warrior's helmet

days to the courts of their liege lords, or were entertained there, and among the common gentry presents and compliments were exchanged. At the present time similar good-will ceremonies and functions are held, but the adults are always in subordinate rôles, supposedly assisting the children, at these festivals.

Spontaneous Revivals

It may be recalled that in 1873 these old-time festivals were officially abolished as antiquated relics of the Tokugawa régime, and replaced by a new set of "national holidays," mostly in commemoration of events concerning the Imperial Household. As the years passed, however, they were gradually revived till they have become what they are—unofficial national festivals. All because there is a children's lure in them. If the Festival of Chrysanthemums alone has been allowed to drop out unregretted, it is chiefly because the drinking of *kiku-saké*, or chrysanthemum wine, connected with it was no concern of children.

If it be said that love is loved and marriage is made in Japan for the sake of unborn babies, it may sound more like a quotation from Schopenhauer than a statement of fact, yet fact it is. It is the common saying and belief in Japan that marriage is the duty one owes to one's parents and ancestors, so that no marriage is considered a success, no matter how happy the married couple are, unless crowned with the joy of a baby. Every person at all entitled to the respect of the community must have had more than one experience of having acted as *nakōdo*, or go-between in marriage, and the duty of a *nakōdo* is not regarded as having been perfectly done till he has

attended as guest of honour at the celebration of the first birth held at the home of the couple in whose bringing together he was the instrument of Providence.

In feudal times childlessness was often conceded to be legitimate cause for divorce. Because of the Japanese touching love of children, the wife would consider herself almost cursed were she childless. It was, therefore, an event of unspeakable joy when she bore her first child. So that as soon as the wife bore a child her prestige and influence rose to the plane of equality with her husband. She had now become mistress of the home, and could challenge the rest of the family, and look the whole world in the face. Until she had a child of her own, therefore, she could not consider her position as entirely secure. There was, of course, an easy remedy for childlessness in the form of adoption, but it was not to be lightly resorted to, for it might cause domestic complications if a birth took place at a later time when the adopted child had grown older.

It is no wonder that there should have developed in the Japanese vocabulary a phrase meaning "child-treasure," which implies that as long as you have this treasure you might do without any other treasure—wealth, talent or social station. Moreover, the Japanese equivalents for such English words as "wealth," "happiness" and "long life" are understood to include the secondary significance of being rich in children, just as the word "riches" cannot be conceived apart from the idea of having plenty of money. We hear a discussion now and then about "birth control," especially among those pretending to be "new" or "modern," but so far it has had no effect upon the yearly increase of births over deaths.



Japan's future mothers at play



Fairy fireworks take place of "Bed-time Stories" on summer evenings

Scenery and Children

The charm and beauty of the Japanese landscape is associated with children. Take typical scenes of the four seasons, as represented by the cherry of spring, the star-spangled summer night, the maple colours of autumn and the snow-clad pines of Christmas time. In every one of these pictures the presence of children is invariably noted, both to enhance and to enjoy the pleasures of each season. Thus, when the cherry blossoms are in their glory, out comes a procession of little boys and girls dressed as Buddhist acolytes, parading through parks and streets. The meeting of the star lovers across the Milky Way on July 7 is the summer-time occasion of merry-making for children. The "kimono day for children," by which some people call the Shichigosan, falls on the finest day in Japanese autumn when the sky is blue and serene, the air rarified and fragrant with the chrysanthemum, and the foliage turning crimson everywhere. The happy children are accompanied by their parents or other kinsmen in their pilgrimages to various shrines, and thousands of people gather at street corners and in the temples to see them. As the old year is passing, they are fêted once more with the modern joy and gaiety of Christmas, almost as the Western children are. Shops and streets bear signs of festivity everywhere, and in every home where there are children, Christian or non-Christian, we hear voices raised in merry-making and in happy domestic reunions.

Love of Children in Literature

No less in art and literature than in everyday life

are the children given a prominent place both as a source of inspiration and an objective. In the Kabuki drama we frequently see children impersonated by juvenile actors to give pathos or joy to the stories unfolded, especially in Chikamatsu's tragic or comic plays of love. Men are generally supposed to live for ambition, for wealth, fame or power, but in Japan the first aim of life seems identified with the love of children. If men work to earn a comfortable living or to rise to high position in life and women marry to keep a house, it is all for the sake of getting good children, thereby perpetuating their family line, which is their most sacred duty to the gods and their highest joy in life.

Let us look up our classics and see how our ancestors treated this matter. The so-called Nara Period, which practically covers the whole of the 8th century, was the golden age of Buddhism, of poetry and the arts. The famous *Mannyoshū*, the oldest and the greatest anthology of Japanese poetry, was produced in this epoch, or rather it contains by far the greatest number of the poems produced during this time. Of the many that sing the love of children the following one, especially the last verse which forms a *tanka* (31-syllable poem) by itself, is very famous and most likely to be quoted as long as the Japanese language is spoken.

In Adoration of Children

Eating the melon, I think of my children,
Eating the chestnut, more and more.
Whence is this affection I cannot tell,
But there they are before my eyes always,

Causing anguish and restlessness night and day.

All your silver an' gold
And costly jewels untold—
Of what use are they?
Treasure more precious than they
Are our children dear, I say.

The author was Yamanoe-no-Okura, and it is stated in a commentary that the poem embodies the sentiments of a father who, at his post in the far-off Chikushi (Kyūshū), thinks of his children left in the capital (Nara). That the poet was a staunch nationalist may be read between the lines. It may be remembered that in this Nara Period (710-794 A.D.) all Japan, from the Emperor and Empress down, had become Buddhists; every household throughout the Empire being ordered to keep a little Buddhist shrine; the great Buddha of Nara—the greatest and the most beautiful in the whole world—had just been built; some of the highest offices in the Court and the Government were occupied by Buddhist priests; and Nara, the Imperial city, like Rome, was the capital of both temporal and spiritual authority.

Taoism

By this time the humane precepts of the gentle Confucius had lost much of their novelty and become eclipsed by the glamour of the lotus religion, and also by the mystic teachings of Lao-tsze, founder of Taoism, and the bewitching paradoxes of his brilliant disciple, Chwang-tsze. Taoism had propagated what appeared to them startlingly wise and original doctrines: That everything



Only one of childhood's many trials!

is nothing and nothing is everything—vice is virtue and strength weakness—the secret of good government is to let the people alone—wisdom is foolish—the wise thing for man to do is to drift down the current of life, like water, without aim or ambition, and to live as long as possible. Chwang-tsze went a step further and through the sonorous period of his wonderful prose wove a brilliant cobweb of Taoistic philosophy of which the following may be taken as a characteristic sentence: “Man is immortal, and his life and death are only chasing each other in endless succession like the sequence of the four seasons.” And he ridiculed Confucian ethics, and laughed at all human ties and emotions.

The doctrines of these two philosophers exerted an insidious influence on the literary productions of that period, an influence which continues till this day to be traced in various branches of Japanese literature. Between the sacrosanct doctrines of Buddhism and the cynical paradoxes of Lao and Chwang, the orthodox ethics of Confucius were for a time neglected. So was the simple but austere doctrine of the Way of the Gods, which stressed reverence for the Mikado and the sacredness of family obligations.

In the light of the moral atmosphere prevailing at that time, one can appreciate both the spirit and the letter of the poem quoted. In plainer language, the poet declaimed: “I cannot tell—nobody can tell—the why and wherefore of it all, but we do love our children, and that is true morality. Children are the best treasure man can have. Is there any treasure on earth comparable to this? If there is, tell me what it is, but you cannot.”

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW

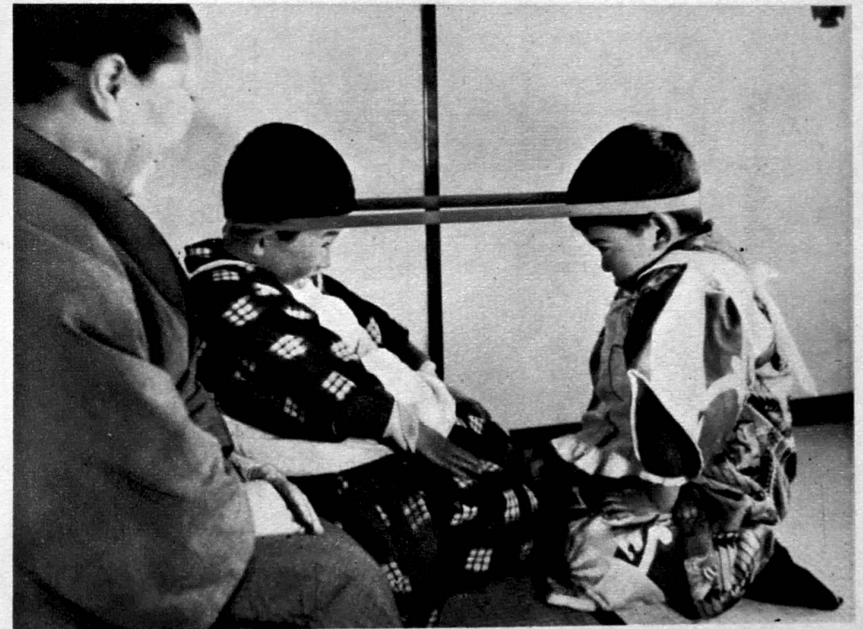
Now that the days of the almighty mother-in-law in the scheme of Japanese home life are gone, the voice of regret is being raised here and there, and we see many an apologist appearing, even from among young ladies, to plead her cause, attesting that she was a much maligned person and that both she and her thankless service are being increasingly missed.

While the Western mother-in-law, we understand, was a bugbear to her son-in-law, her Japanese prototype was one in the eyes of her daughter-in-law. She was a necessary product of an age, an indispensable instrument of fate in bringing up a good daughter-in-law. But for her there would have been no model wife, no Japanese home, no family life such as we have inherited.

In old days of early marriage when the groom was less than twenty and the bride fifteen they would have been helpless without the guiding hand of the mother-in-law to keep the home going in the way it should. The girl was brought up in the tender atmosphere of loving parents, "shielded from the hard winds of the outside world," as an old saying is, and in blissful ignorance of the realities of life, "unable to tell the East from the West." Such a person, when she was married, must find in her mother-in-law what a new recruit must find in the drill sergeant, or what a new college graduate finds in his first employer. Even the most kindly offices of her



Practising calligraphy is New Year custom in the home



Head tug-of-war



A little country girl listens to her granny's yarns



"Around the kotatsu one wintry night
The farmer's rosy children sat"

mother-in-law must sometime appear harsh and cruel to the young bride who wrongly believed that her mother-in-law might prove a tyrant. It was only natural, therefore, if she thought somewhat ill of her mother-in-law. On the side of the mother-in-law, she also had her pre-conceived and unalterable views. Having in her time gone through the same mill, and having found in later life that her experience on the whole had been all for her good, she considered it both her privilege and her duty to rule over the young woman, firmly convinced that she was working for the salvation of both her son and daughter-in-law. It was a sort of harmless feud that was waged for centuries.

Young women of this enlightened age, in the first flush of their awakened self-consciousness, raised the protest: "I will not marry if I have to live with a mother-in-law." Such a protest is no longer called for, as it is the mother-in-law who will rather beg to be excused from being annoyed by young married folk. With the "abolition of age," as already said, older men and women must continue immersed in affairs of the world on their own account; they can no longer hope to depend entirely on their children or children-in-law in the winter of life. They must work harder and longer to give their children better sustenance and more expensive education than their fathers did. In fact, when they have fairly succeeded in marrying off their daughters and giving their boys a college education they are in most cases as good as finished themselves; many parents do not survive it. How could they, under the circumstances, take on the onerous and thankless duty of "bringing up" the young daughter-in-law, unless they really must?

In country districts where the majority of the people are farmers and tradesmen, the cohabitation of young and old married folk is often not only necessary but advisable. Where the son is to inherit the occupation and property of his father, he must make his father's home his own, and his wife will have to live with him and his parents. But in urban districts where young men are not obliged to succeed to the parental occupation but may pursue professions of their own, it is increasingly their custom to set up a home for themselves. Should they live under the same roof as their parents, it is the older rather than the younger couple who play the humble part. When a dispute arises, the mother-in-law may bring the weight of her longer experience and wider knowledge of the world to bear on it, against which the younger wife will call upon her school-learned and book-inspired lore; and the contest more likely than not will end in the defeat of the mother-in-law, as the sympathy of the whole civilized world is with the younger. In an ever-increasing degree older people are advised on all hands to yield and make way before the younger.

More Liberty, More Divorces

So this is going to be perhaps a golden age for young wives, but there is the inevitable "perhaps" in the case. There are already signs that the young wife's heaven without mother-in-law is not necessarily going to be as happy as it was once thought to be. Without the restraining hand of an arbiter between wife and husband, the married couple are thrown on each other for good or bad, and, in case of unpleasantness or disagreement, they have to fight it out between themselves, and may often go



Anticipation! Grilled rice-cakes make youngsters' mouths water

to extremes failing an object of mutual fear or respect.

With the complications in Japan's daily life it is only to be expected that domestic trials and tribulations should also increase. These are pretty well of the same variety as in other countries, either of the geometrically unequilateral triangle variety or of the incompatibility class leading to all sorts of solutions, some not without comedy and others with not a little tragedy. This is, of course, an inevitable concomitant of modern life, and yet we who stand, so to speak, midway between the old and the new are tempted to wonder if there is not a *via media* somewhere along which the old and new plans may be brought to meet in harmonious alliance, thereby making the nearest approach to an ideal home. In fact, we know of many families where such an ideal has been all but fulfilled, and where the advantages of the old system are enjoyed without their drawbacks of former times.

In short, the home life of the young Japanese is in the crucible, and some years will have yet to pass before it will assume a more definite form. Meanwhile, we know for certain that the mother-in-law of the old school, such as our grandmother knew and was herself, has disappeared, or that, if remaining, she has been entirely changed in appearance and in character. As for the old man, her husband, he no longer cherishes the bygone ambition to be the grand old man of the domain and to claim the filial piety of both his son and daughter-in-law. He is right glad to keep out of the way of the young, and continue to do his job or ride his hobby-horse in undisturbed peace, if good luck would have it, in company with his dear old spouse, the typical Japanese Darby and Joan.

THE JAPANESE HOMESTEAD

As far as outward appearances go, Japanese houses are the least pretentious part of the material life in the Empire. Except in busy modern cities they are for the most part wooden structures with tiled or thatched roofs, the floor covered with mats and the partitions generally made of "paper doors" sliding in grooves.

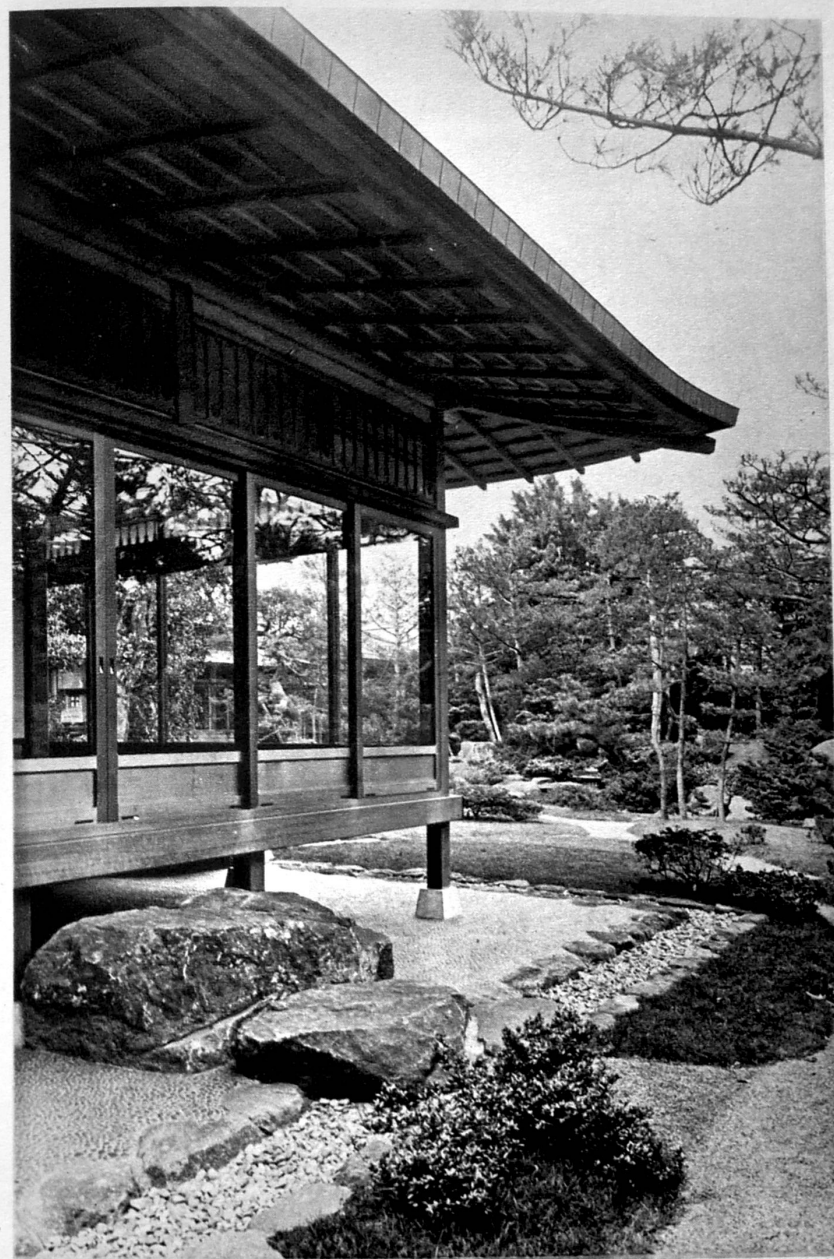
The comparative backwardness in modern Japanese architecture, excepting Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, was due to the frequent outbreak of fires, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tidal waves which wrought havoc during the Tokugawa Period, and to the national isolation enforced during nearly 300 years which prevented the influence of Western architecture from penetrating this country. In the past half-century, however, Japan has awakened to a consciousness of this defect; and that she has been rapidly and energetically making up for the lost time is evidenced by the signs of modernization which may be seen everywhere. The most notable symbol of the remarkable progress made is the Diet building in Tokyo, completed in November, 1936, built entirely by Japanese architects and with home-produced materials. In its interior arrangement, a decorative scheme with original Japanese ideas has been embodied, and the great edifice stands a monumental demonstration of what Japan is capable of doing in modern architecture.

Falsified Prophecy

For all that, the underlying principles of the proper Japanese house are not forgotten. Time was, in early Meiji, when tidal waves of Westernism swept over the land, that the Japanese house was thought to be doomed, together with tea ceremony, flower arrangement, the Ogasawara etiquette, Kabuki drama and all other pre-Meiji arts and accomplishments. In 1885 the late Mr. J. M. Dixon, in the course of a lecture on a Japanese subject, said: "Japanese etiquette is rapidly giving way before the powerful thawing influence of Western customs. Its old bloom is gone beyond recall, for modern Japan is too busy over more important matters to busy itself with the minutiae of Cha-no-yu and other ceremonies."

If this Japanologue came to life today he would open his eyes in sheer incredulity to see all the arts and ceremonies of old Japan he considered as doomed to disappear being revived in a more attractive form than ever dreamed of in Japan. Regarding the Japanese house, some of its principal features are now being adopted on board Japanese liners, in modern foreign-style hotels expressly built for foreigners and in the houses of Japanese residents in foreign countries.

There is an intimate link between the Japanese house and the Japanese life and character. Take the *tokonoma*, for instance. Without it, half the refinement of Japanese home life would be gone. It was originally said to be a sacred niche in which to deposit the image of the Buddha or a domestic shrine, but it has since become a place in which to hang scrolls and put an incense box, flower



"A garden is a lovely spot god wot"



Monastic repose of the Japanese home



Tea before the sacred alcove (*tokonoma*)

vase, etc. Where would be the tea ceremony without the *tokonoma*, or the *tatami* to sit on, and the landscape garden to look out upon?

Home, Not Castle

It has been said of the Englishman's home that it is his castle, a bulwark of his liberty, but the Japanese house has no such bellicose associations. A European house savours strongly of a mediaeval castle with high walls around it, doors hermetically sealed and small windows like loopholes looking out into the world below. In it the chambers are partitioned from one another and are locked on the inside, like so many cells in a dungeon; in which the occupants surround themselves with trophies of battle and hunting, revelling in the sense of comfort and security in contrast to the cold and stormy weather which is raging in the world outside. Its inside arrangement reminds us of the Tower of London or the Kremlin of Moscow upon a diminutive scale—palace, museum, prison, fortress combined.

The Japanese house suggests nothing of the kind. It stands exposed to the four corners of heaven, the sun creeping into the furthest corners. If there is no privacy, strictly speaking, privacy is unnecessary in a well-regulated house, as it too often is a source of intrigue or conspiracy. Inside, it has room, rather than rooms, for the whole house is thrown into one big space the moment the paper doors are removed from their grooves. If there is no superfluous furniture, it is only invisible, being stowed away in the *oshiire*, or the stronghouse at the back, not necessarily an evidence of poverty. It is considered vulgar to

display unnecessary furniture, as a woman putting rings on all her fingers would be.

It has been said and with good reason that the Japanese house has probably been developed from the native bungalow in the tropical regions from which some of the Japanese ancestors may have migrated to Japan. Yes, the Japanese house has all the laughing and loud-talking qualities of the warmer south in which the inhabitants love to lounge on the wide verandah, basking in the sun, talking freely with their neighbours across a smiling garden of flowers and birds. It has had nothing to do with the ice-bound stone-house of the arctic zone in which men and women are huddled together in dark, gloomy silence. So the Japanese house is more fit to live in during summer than winter, but, as the human skin is weakening, under the softening influence of growing wealth and luxury, better means are being studied to take the sting of wintry cold from it.

Gods and Buddhas

There are two things invariably found in every Japanese house, however devoid of other articles of furniture;—two household shrines, one being of an ornate make covered with black lacquer and bright with gilded designs, which is Buddhist, and the other of plain wood after the Shinto fashion. In the first are enshrined the memories of ancestors, as represented by mortuary tablets bearing their names, their images or even photographs, and the second is dedicated to the gods of Shinto.

These shrines are the symbols of Japanese piety, not apparent otherwise. The meaning of the piety shown in



Morning prayer before family Shinto shrine



In memory of the family's faithful before the family Buddhist shrine

the daily worship at these altars is quite simple. Buddha belongs to a sacred region above this world to which men must go after this sublunary life is over, so his grace must be invoked both for themselves and for their dead relatives. The Shinto deities are the guardians of this land of Nippon, keeping it secure from calamity and foreign enemies, and must, therefore, be gratefully worshipped.

It is true that these devotional acts are often performed more as matters of daily routine than as conscious acts of religious devotion, but they cannot fail to shed a purifying and sanctifying light on the house. Children brought up in such an atmosphere will come to believe that there are somewhere in the house the souls of ancestors and the gods of the land watching them, protecting them, ready to punish if wrong is done but merciful enough to forgive if forgiveness is asked with penitent prayer and atonement.

Japanese Houses will Last

Since the Imperial Restoration began more than half a century ago, it has become customary for many homes to place in the *tokonoma*, or in the shelf adjoining it, a portrait of the Emperor or some member of the Imperial Family, in the same spirit in which our forbears observed the custom of worshipping the Shinto gods at home.

All these characteristic acts of piety and other habits of daily life, bequeathed to us from time immemorial, would have to be greatly modified if we were to discard the proper Japanese house in favour of foreign-style buildings. It is highly improbable, almost impossible, to see the Japanese house, such as it is, abolished. There will

doubtless be great improvement in the light of modern architectural principles to bring it up to the rising standard of physical comfort, and to fulfill the now diverse requirements of a growingly complex life. But the fundamentals of the proper Japanese house as a homestead for our age-old family life will stay unchanged for many years.



Lady's sartorial treasury

MORAL BACKGROUND OF JAPANESE HOME

People brought up in the religious traditions of Christendom may easily envisage the possibility of a comfortable material existence, even of a highly developed intellectual and artistic life, in a so-called pagan nation, but that it can contain really happy home-life they will probably find not so easy to believe. Such persons, if there be, should consider the life in ancient Greece or that in Japan today. There is a strong resemblance between them. Both had pantheons of numerous gods and goddesses, the one under the great Zeus and the other under the Amaterasu-Ōmikami, the Heaven-shining Goddess of the Sun.

Japan's Moral Foundation

Nearly 1,300 years ago, almost in the morning mists of her awakened national life, Japan stood converted to Buddhism—a religion of eternal life and of mercy and benevolence to all life, even to plants and insects. Buddhism, or its preachers, knew how to adapt its doctrines to circumstances of clime and climate, and presently there was an alliance between them and the older doctrines of the native gods, both united in upholding the sacrosanct traditions respecting the Mikado. Precepts of Confucius and other Chinese sages and philosophers had already preceded Buddhism, paving the way for its advent. Thus in 8th-century Japan there already reigned a golden age

of religion, art and letters. Then were produced great masterpieces in poetry and in art, especially in painting and architecture. In acts of piety and of religious fervour wonderful examples were set. Since that amazing era of Nara civilization Japan has kept in evergreen freshness the memory of the ancient culture and traditions, and no wonder they have been closely interwoven into the fabric of Japanese life, national and individual. Upon this moral foundation has been built the modern civilization, made up of the European morals, science, religion, arts and philosophy, freely adopted and adapted during the past seventy years. Such is the moral structure of Japan, and such is the paganism of Japan, if you like. Its most vivid illustration and tangible exemplification may be seen in the Japanese family life of today.

Foreign Influences

There were also dark pages in our history: The arrogance of sacerdotalism and consequent clashes between ecclesiastic and lay authorities; internecine warfare between the military clans of Genji and Heike; and unphilosophic feuds among scholars and literati of different schools. But through it all, the fundamental principles of national life have been kept intact, just as the Shōsōin of Nara, repository of priceless treasures of the Nara Period (710-794 A.D.), has been preserved till this day despite the many fires and battles which have broken out around it.

Thus the Japanese life, moral and material, is of a highly complex character, having very deep roots in the soil of history and tradition, richly nourished by the re-



Verandah is Nature's grandstand in Japanese home



"Vanity of vanities . . ." Here at least East meets West

ligions and philosophies of India, China and Europe. Reverence for the Mikado is the oldest heritage of the nation, coeval with the dawn of the nation. The very name of the country is significant: "Sumeramikuni," or "the Mikado's August Country." Filial piety, fraternal love and submission to proper authority are of Confucian origin. Confucianism has also taught, though in terms of a lay moralist, reverence for Heaven as the source of all-pervading grace for mankind. All the qualities that go to make men and women model human beings, such as the thirteen qualities of Benjamin Franklin, once so popular with Japanese youth, were inculcated by numerous schools of moral teachers of both native and foreign origin.

The Imperial Rescript

To cover all this extensive field of moral and religious teaching there is one small compact document which every Japanese knows by heart, and that is the Imperial Rescript on Education issued in 1890. This is read by every little girl and boy as soon as he is able to read, the ceremonial reading of it being one of the principal acts at every important school function.

The moral life of the Japanese is not as strained as that of a rigid moralist of this or that denomination. As subjects of Dai Nippon and of the Emperor, we have such and such obligations, just as we are to behave in such and such a manner as children, brothers as well as neighbours, citizens or public officials, and so on. As men in their cosmic relations to the universe, we are, under the Constitution, allowed perfect liberty of faith. A distinct line is drawn between matters temporal and matters spiritual,

there being no overlapping of the boundaries. The fact of a man being a Shintoist, a Buddhist or a Christian does not, ipso facto, bestow upon him any advantage or disadvantage in the estimate of public authority or in the field of competition in any line of endeavour. This is a most remarkable feature of Japanese polity, which we would call Japanese liberalism under Imperial protection.

It is, however, true that an increasingly zealous and watchful effort is being made in these days regarding the "clarification of the national polity," and this I would think is a temporary phenomenon, bound to pass with the return of normalcy, for I do not think the national polity of Japan is such a fragile plant as to require so constant and so zealous a watering to keep it in flower. Bolshevism, Communism, and all other "red" doctrines calculated to loosen the ancient ties of love and reverence between the Mikado and His people, are feared as a pest, and everything is being done to keep them away from the Imperial shores. Therefore, so long as you do not attempt to revolutionize the national polity, you have every liberty under the sun here, being free to think and act just as you wish.

SUNDAY MORNING IN JAPANESE HOME

It is early dawn, but already there is stir and bustle, for the Mesomiyas are early risers. Though the older folk, especially the "grandmother," would have liked to sleep longer on Sundays, it cannot be this morning, as the two kiddies have a busy programme today, and they are up early, animatedly talking, laughing and discussing. It is national holiday on top of Sunday, a combination which the young masters and children do not appreciate too much. They are patriotic enough to want to celebrate the holiday for its own sake. There is determination all round to make one holiday serve for two. Hence the unwonted bustle.

This is an exceptionally large family, consisting of eleven persons: Three married couples, two children, two babies and one maidservant. Mr. Mesomiya Sr. is called "grandpa," or, "the old man," not so much because of his age, he is only sixty-two, as because he happens to have two grandchildren, Mrs. Mesomiya calls herself "Obaa-san" (grandmother) on the same principle, her age being only fifty-five. She is a female Mussolini, and she is the last court of appeal in the household government.

The house is large enough and to spare, being built not so long ago with a view to the swelling size of the family. "What should we do with such a desert of a house if all the young folk were gone from us?" is one of the oft-reiterated complaints heard from the grandmother's lips. Down

in a nook of her heart somewhere seems to lurk a haunting fear that some members of the family may have to go some day.

The two children—a boy of 13 and a girl of 15—have gone out to do their morning exercises in the Hachiman temple near by, where every morning about fifty persons, old and young, assemble for the radio gymnastics. Several old men with white beards and bone-and-skin faces are seen in the group, rain or shine.

The Morning Worship

The maid servant, Osode-san, is up, of course, glued to the gas stove in the kitchen, superintending the preparation of the breakfast, while the rest of the family take turns in making their matutinal ablutions. Now, Obaa-san performs her first and most important devotion of the day. She goes to the Shinto altar which, curiously, is placed on a shelf hung from the ceiling in one of the rooms adjoining the *genkwan*, almost to be seen from outside. Her worship here consists of one deep bow and the clapping of her hands three times, which takes about five seconds.

Anon is heard the “ching, ching” of a bell; it is the Obaa-san performing her morning service at the *butsudan*, or Buddhist shrine. It consists of mumbling some words, inwardly articulated, so that none can hear what she is saying, preceded by striking the little bowl-like bell placed upon a padded cushion, with a pencil-like rod. The ceremony takes only one minute.

On the 1st, 15th and 28th of every month, as well as on the memorial days of ancestors and during the Bon holidays in July, she presents lighted tallow candles and

other offerings, but on ordinary days she just rings, bows and prays, after the offering of rice and water which is usually made by the servant as soon as the morning rice is boiled. Once the Obaa-san replied in answer to some impertinent comment made by one of the company at the breakfast table: “What would have become of all of you if it were not for my prayers every day?” From which it was inferred that she was praying for the good of the family—for their health, wealth and happiness.

The two young ladies make a point of following her example as soon as their toilet is over, but as to the male members of the family, including the old man and the young husbands, they are apt to “forget” the ceremony, and at times will hear the Obaa-san’s hand-clapping or bell-ringing while in bed, only to remember that it is time to get up.

“Grandpa”

At the breakfast table the two kiddies are missing. They have come back, eaten and gone out again. There are to be some athletic matches at the Meiji stadium—the exciting event of the season over which the whole of Tokyo goes crazy. The games begin in the afternoon, but to make sure of their seats many people go at early dawn.

As the old man surveys the company, a nameless emotion seems to swell in his bosom, and he pursues his meal in thoughtful silence. It is only the second week of his eldest son’s marriage, and the new couple, with the other young couple, are seated before him, with the Obaa-san at the other end. A certain air of formality hangs over them; they are apparently not quite used to each other as yet.

Mr. Mesomiya knew his best days early in his thirties, when he thought himself well on the way to becoming a millionaire. Plop, changed the tide of fortune, and he went from bad to worse, and everything he did went askew till he stood on the brink of bankruptcy. (There were a boy and a girl, very young then, but now both are married and actually seated before him with their respective spouses.) He pulled himself together, determined to begin all over again, and became an insurance canvasser. It was not a very dignified job in these days. The old street-song beginning with "If the insurance solicitor be a human being, etc.," was not quite forgotten. But he stuck to it for 25 years. Declining all offers of promotion in position, he preferred to remain in the old job till he was regarded as a prince of canvassers and one of the treasures of the company. His clients came to him, bringing more clients with them, instead of his going after them, as all fresh canvassers had to do. Meanwhile, two more children were born—now a girl of fifteen and a boy of thirteen. He has also paid his old debts, saved a little and built a house of his own—quite a pretentious one, ten rooms upstairs and down, on an estate of 500 *tsubo* in this north-eastern suburb of Tokyo, since incorporated in Greater Tokyo.

His Son-in-law

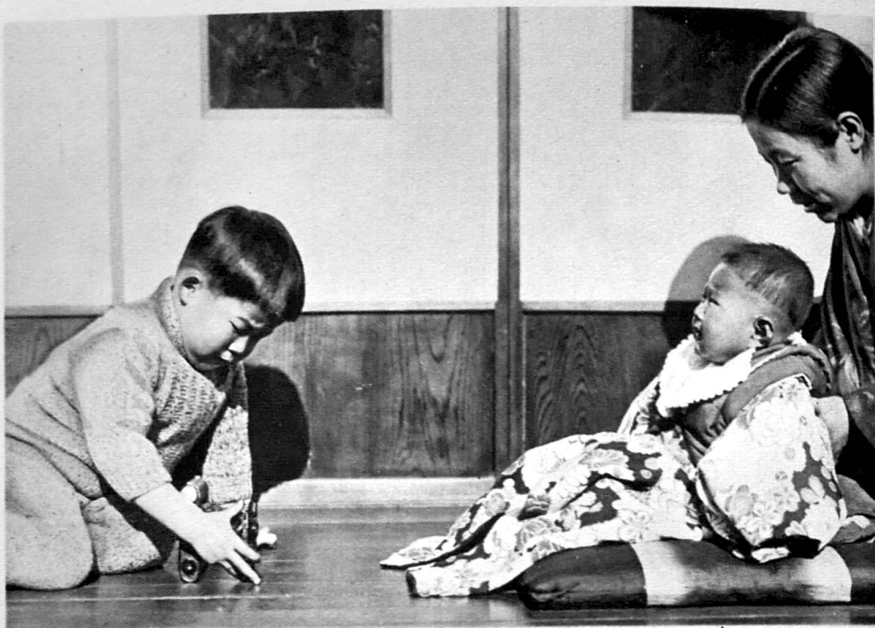
His first daughter, that is, his second child, was married five years ago, when she was but eighteen, to one of the promising clerks of the same insurance company. The old man more than his daughter cast an eye on him, for though he was an Imperial University graduate, he was not



Three generations' modest amusement



Sumo on the Hearth, with little sister as umpire



Baby's sun-bath on verandah



• Little Madam Chrysanthemum

snob enough to think himself too good for the company. The young Mr. Wataru is much respected in the firm, even by the loud-speaking manager who sometimes finds it difficult to understand his classical phrases, having himself risen from the ranks, and not being accustomed to the language of culture. The president of the company and his wife were kind enough to act as the *nakōdo* for the ceremony, and Mr. Wataru had no objection to living under the same roof with his parents-in-law, though he has not married into the family as an *irimuko* (adopted son and heir). On one of the two pillars forming the gate to the house is affixed a wooden tablet bearing Mr. Wataru's family name, while the other pillar bears that of Mr. Mesomiya.

Two babies, both boys, have been born of this marriage—the darlings of the whole family, especially of the grandmother. According to the old idea, all this may seem a reversal of the proper order, for a younger daughter was married before the eldest son and heir, but the son was only a student at the time the marriage took place. Mesomiya Jr. has always looked on Wataru as if he were his elder brother, though legally Wataru is his younger brother-in-law.

Mr. Mesomiya Jr.

Two years ago Mr. Mesomiya Jr. graduated at the College of Architecture, and was immediately employed in a certain Government office as assistant engineer. He was a peculiar lad. Though endowed with good brains, he was constitutionally incapable of drinking or smoking; his only hobby was walking and hiking; he was taciturn, addicted

to shabby clothes and solitary habits. Not strikingly handsome, he cut a grotesque figure, as he lumbered his way about on high clogs, his hair unkempt and his feet bare of socks, summer and winter, and the girls fled before him. "He may be a genius and all that, but he is so filthy," they said. But all the men friends of the family thought him a prodigy who would make a name in the world some day.

Since he became a "salaried man" he has somewhat improved in appearance; he puts on the costume of civilization, viz. tie, shoes, felt hat, etc. all of which, however, seem lost upon his topheavy head and his gnarled trunk. He has already added to his credit several monumental buildings, including a palatial hotel, a railway station, a stadium, etc., and he is regarded as a handy and willing workman with whom his superiors would not part for the world, though another bureau in the same Department wanted him at a higher salary. All this, however, did not seem to enhance his value in the eyes of marriageable girls. Yet the miracle happened only 12 days ago. He was married to one of the most eligible girls the marriage market could offer—a well-educated, lovely girl of two and twenty and of a very modern type, daughter of a landed proprietor said to be enormously rich, one of Mr. Mesomiya Senior's old clients.

It is whispered that this girl had known an affair of the heart once, but had emerged therefrom disillusioned of all young men with pretty faces, and when she heard of the virtues and talents of Mr. Mesomiya Jr. she at once respected him, and, when she came to know him personally, learned to love him. Hence this romance without

romance. Mr. Mesomiya Jr., too lazy to keep a house of his own, invited his bride to live under his parental roof, which she was willing to do, knowing what sort of persons her parents-in-law were. A week's honeymoon over, the young man must resume his official duties early this week.

To return to the Ojii-san's reflections, is he musing on the somewhat perplexing question of how to right this apparently topsyturvy situation. His daughter, with her husband, seems to have become fixed in the home, while his first son and heir, with his modern rich wife, appears to be a bird of passage, destined to leave the house some day unless the rest of the family go; or is he merely enjoying a soothing but melancholy sense of relief, now that he has "delivered his two jewels into the hands of their legitimate owners?"

Though a busy worker always, the Ojii-san is no longer a slave of the company. Soon after his son obtained his official job, he had to retire from the company, owing to the new regulation regarding the age-limit on the service of employees. The directors, hating to lose his service, persuaded him to continue work as the company's agent on a commission basis, instead of as its employee as before. So he put up a sign-board announcing a general insurance agency, and at the same time made a contract with other reputable companies to cover all branches of insurance. Since then he has been his own master, doing much of his work through correspondence, and continuing to enjoy about the same income as before.

He can give up all work if he wants to, but he doesn't. The lessons of his adversity, now nearly 30 years old, are

still vividly remembered, from which he has drawn his favourite maxim: "No work is harder than enforced idleness."

Mrs. Mesomiya Jr.

The breakfast over, Mr. Mesomiya Jr., so lethargic in days of single blessedness, shows an extraordinary alacrity in rising to his feet. "Ah, we must take the 10 a.m. train for Yokosuka to call on one of my superiors there. Come, you must get ready, Mayo-san!" And he adds that it is a nuisance, this post-nuptial duty to visit friends and relatives, and that at the rate of one or two visits every Sunday how long it is going to last he cannot tell.

After him follows Mayo-san, a young woman of stately figure, almost queenly by the side of her cumbrous husband, whose shoulders are uncommonly high, supporting a large bull-like head with scarce any space in between, where the neck ought to be. Mayo-san is very fair, almost like an Occidental woman, with a pair of brilliant jet-black eyes, shedding a searching light of intelligence, and her lips are thin, her mouth small and sensual. She speaks in a high key and somewhat quickly with finely articulated accents, which may betoken feminine talkativeness, but at the present stage of intimacy her character remains more or less unrevealed. She is smiling always, all obedience and acquiescence whenever her husband asks her to do anything.

Presently the couple reappear to say "sayonara" for the morning, the man in a smart morning coat and the wife in resplendent "visiting kimono," the lower part of which bears a gorgeous chrysanthemum design. With a silk

scarf and parasol in one hand and handbag in the other, she looks like a show girl at a department store; on her left fingers shine two brilliant rings—a platinum wedding ring with a diamond and another with a large yellow opal. The whole family come out to the *genkwan* to see them off, the mother and daughter with an eye of envious admiration.

"You might as well leave a card at the house opposite, thanking them for their courtesy." It is the old man bidding the son. "There was a removal a few days ago, and that house is occupied at last, and I forgot to drop in and thank them for the *soba* they sent up."

"O. K., father!" and off they go, side by side.

Mr. and Mrs. Wataru

Mr. Wataru wearily takes up the newspapers and slowly wends his way up the stairs into his private study. He is of a kindred nature with his brother-in-law, both being lazy, care-free sort of dogs, passive rather than active, more fond of taking than giving orders at home. But otherwise he is at the opposite pole. He is a thorough man of the world, very big in build, quite handsome, looking almost like an athletic champion. Able alike to drink and smoke, he is capable even of walking into fashionable cafés on the Ginza and flirting with waitresses. On returning home after such an escapade, however, he will make a full report to the people at home, to which his child-wife will listen with much laughing and quite a detached interest as if it never occurred to her to be jealous of her husband's conduct outside. Mr. Wataru is a man of many hobbies; he can play cards, Japanese and foreign,

chess or *go*, and is a good hand at archery, billiards and Mahjong. Recently he has taken it into his head to look up old Japanese literature, which seems to be all the craze among the literary-minded now. Time never hangs on his hands, nor does life hold much worry for him.

Mrs. Watāru is a very slim and small girl, very much like her mother in that respect, and looks extremely young, almost as young as eighteen. When seen by herself, as when she goes out for her weekly lessons in flower arrangement and cooking, both of which she started after she was married and had borne two babies, she is never suspected of being the mother of two. Without the burden of overmuch education, but equipped with gentle domestic manners and everyday common sense and an unsuspected capacity to talk with fluency even in the company of men and strangers, she is a born housewife of the old school, a young replica of her mother. But unfortunately her health is delicate; she has the look of "an autumnal leaf trembling in the moonbeams."

No. I Room

Directly the room is cleared of the breakfast things and of the persons referred to, the old man takes the broomstick and sweeps the whole length and breadth of the room, as is his wont after every meal, and sits down before his small desk to look into his morning mail. While he is reading, we shall take a look round the room.

It was his idea, when the house was building, to make this 10-mat room a special parlour for receiving honourable guests only. With that end in view he had the best of wood used for the ceiling, *tokonoma* pillars, beams around



Family's radiant joy in silhouette



Modern Japan's young idea



"A world of wonder in baby's eyes"

th eroom and the verandah, all of which are shiny in the light of morning. Facing the south and the east, and situated in the farthest corner of the house, it looks out upon a typical landscape garden with dwarf lake, mountain cascade and stone lanterns, all complete.

The interior decoration is simple, and there is no straining after cheap aestheticism. In the *tokonoma* is hung a calligraphic scroll embodying the well-known writing of the late Admiral Tōgō, below which is placed a dark-stained bronze vase with a variety of autumnal flowers arranged in the graceful style of the Ikenobō school. Around the walls over the upper grooves are put up various pictures, some in frames and some in *gaku*, of which the water-colour painting of Mount Fuji, facing south, is most striking.

But after moving in and finding that very few honourable personages deigned to visit him at his new home, he saw no sense in keeping this sunniest and most comfortable room unused, so he decided to use it as a living-room for himself and his family, assigning the dismal foreign-style room near the *genkwan* for visitors. So this No. I room has since become a sort of club-house for the whole family in which meals are eaten, games played, conferences held and family guests entertained. It is also his business office, when he is at home working, and his work, by the way, consists in letter-writing and turning over the leaves of the ledgers. He is proof against interruptions; no noise can distract him. The crying of babies, the laughter of women or the noisiest wireless jazz has no more effect on him than water upon ducks. Quite an enigma he is, even to his wife and children sometimes.

A Sermon in the Room

On one side of the room is a beautiful mahogany book case which, however, is full of thick Directories, Who's Whos and various papers and application forms more of business utility than intellectual nourishment.

At 10 sharp he switches on the radio and a loud, seemingly angry voice fills the room—a Buddhist priest ranting. Last Sunday it was a Confucian scholar lecturing on a text from the Analects. Sometimes it is even a Christian sermon broadcast from a Protestant church, or a mass from a Catholic church. Buddhist sermons are by no means infrequent. Out of idle curiosity the Ojii-san listens in. "Suppose here is an old widow who long, long ago, in the time of poverty and misery which then was threatening her husband's house, was married into the family, and who has given her lifelong service to recovering her husband's fortunes and to bringing up the children to be fine men and women—and who has buried her husband in an honourable way, marrying all her children suitably. Is not such a person entitled to a happy, peaceful life in her old age, to be treated with respect and affection by all the world? Supposing that her relatives, instead of honouring her and taking care of her in her old age, should say to one another, 'Why, this woman originally belonged to another family—a stranger to this house—and therefore she must be divorced from us and made to return to the place from which she came, now that she is old and useless'—where is the justice or gratitude of it all? Buddhism in Japan is in the same predicament. It came originally from India and China. But since it wedded into this land 1,300

years ago it has remained faithful in the service of the country. What is there in the culture and civilization of Japan—in any branch of it whatsoever—to which Buddhism has not contributed out of its abundant store of art, wisdom, learning and beauty? Shintoism itself has been not a little influenced by Buddhism. But Buddhism is no longer Indian or Chinese; it has crept into the very blood and bone of Japanese life, inalienable and inseparable, and yet there is a tendency in this country to separate the inseparable under the pretext of keeping the old Japanism unadulterated—"

At this point a visitor is announced, and the old man with a sigh of relief turns switches off abruptly. Let us also take our prying eyes and ears from off the private life of the good Mesomiyas, wishing good luck to every one of them.

The Mesomiya's is in a way an exceptional home, but not so rare as to be a great exception. Its exceptional element consists in the mingling of the old and the new, modernistic intellectuality allied to old-fashioned traditions. This is not surprising when we remember that a high degree of culture and education is often found in harmonious alliance with great conservatism, while what is shallow and cheap often passes for the new and modernistic.

MAKING PRESENTS

It was part of the old Japanese etiquette that a person, especially a lady, making a call, should never go without taking a present. Just as a Japanese letter begins with the compliments of the season or inquiry after the health of its recipient, so a polite person never makes a call "empty-handed." The teaching is nowadays generally honoured more in the breach than in the observance, but its spirit is none the less remembered, especially among old-fashioned or conservative people.

If this custom of exchanging presents is being less and less observed nowadays, it has lost much of its old-time justification. In feudal days or under social conditions equivalent to old Japan it had a sort of ameliorating influence on the effects of more or less unavoidable social injustice, or misfortune. Relations between poor and rich, between fortunate and unfortunate were rendered occasions for exercise of virtue rather than of envy or strife. Thanks to this benevolent cult of present-making, even the poorest could play the part of "giver," and were spared the humiliation of being receiver and beggar always.

Symbol of Long Acquaintance

The day you take up your domicile at any place you are a neighbour to a number of people around you, besides being an independent inhabitant of a *chō* (district), a *ku* (ward) and a city. In the latter capacity you have to pay

a certain tax. As a neighbour your obligations are of a moral character which you can refuse, though at the risk of being thought eccentric. Women more than men are sticklers in this respect, for they pass most of their time at home and see a good deal of their neighbours. This is much more the case in the Kwansai than in the Kwantō district, for in the Kwansai neighbourly relations were from olden times very much more cordial than in the less urbane northeast.

The day you move into a new house you make a personal call on your neighbours, instead of their calling on you, at least those of the five houses, three opposite and one on each side, accompanied with a present of some *soba* (buckwheat vermicelli) or coupon exchangeable for such at the local *soba* vendor's (which is generally sent by the *soba* man before or after). This is a very old removal custom, still generally observed, though in some out-of-the-way districts different customs may obtain, the *soba* being regarded as a symbol of long-enduring acquaintanceship. Thus begins a whole series of present-making. Indeed the *soba* is symbolic, for present-making continues as long as you live, and it may be a troublesome or pleasing duty according to the light in which you view it.

Rules of the old etiquette, including the canons of good manners and breeding, centre on the problem of present-making—what and how to give and to receive, and how to behave and what to say in speech or letter-writing when giving or receiving. In aristocratic circles in which the first duty was to maintain inherited dignity of rank and station, life was a continuous round of giving and receiving presents, and the least deviation from ac-

cepted rules easily spells ruin. In the famous vendetta of the Forty-Seven Rōnin, the cause of the tragedy may be traced to ill-advised conduct on the part of an inexperienced *daimyō* or his high retainers in the matter of present-making. Besides, these persons may say: "What is life if there is no giving or receiving of presents?"

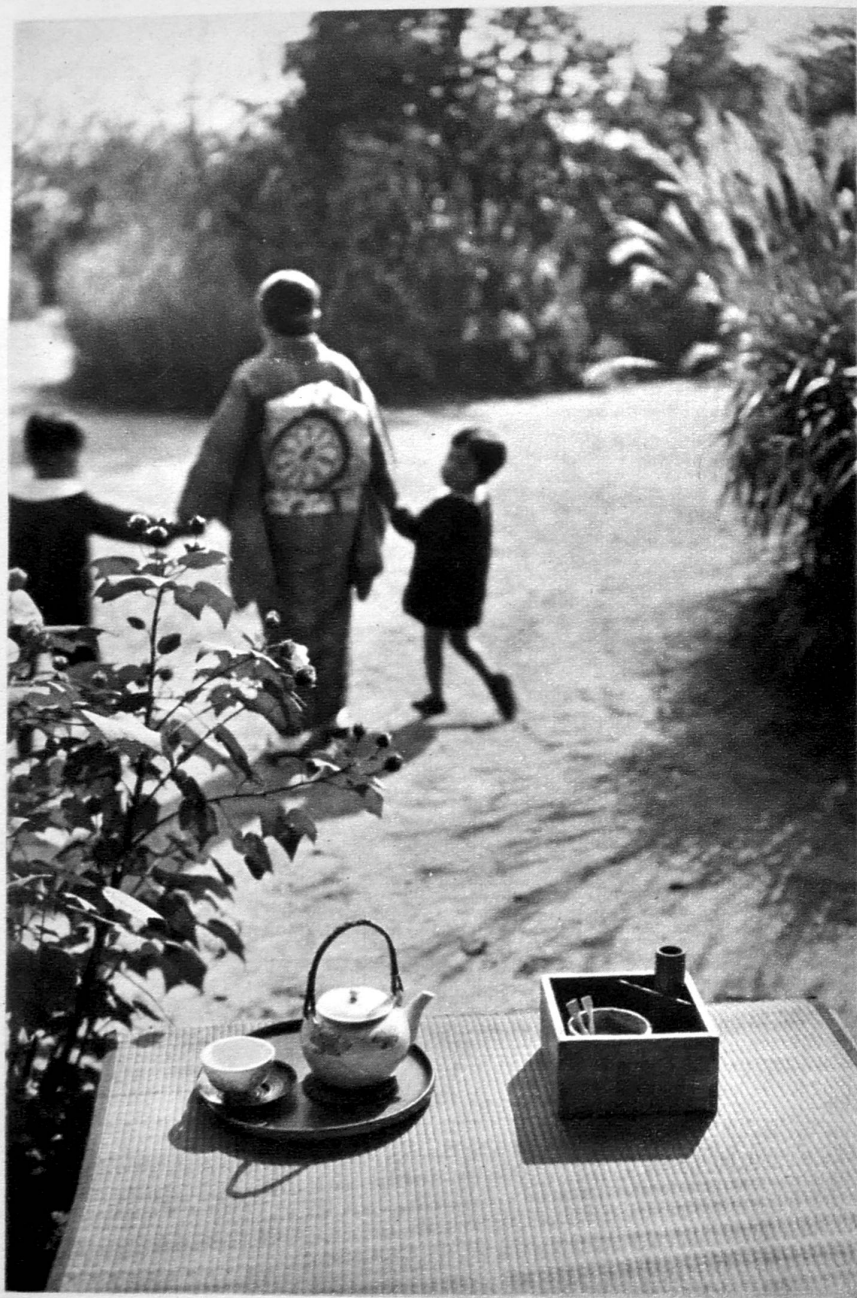
Toshidama to Seibo

In New Year season, which practically covers the whole of January, presents are called "toshidama," or "year-offerings," and everybody may give and receive with utmost freedom and no scruple. The poor may remember the rich with trifles worth a shilling or two, which the rich may return with presents double, treble or even ten times in value, according to the particular relations in which they stand. Very often presents may be received without returning, as in the case of your grocer and rice man bringing "tokens of a Happy New Year." At the Bon season in July, presents are known as "chūgen," or "middle season," presumably offered at the altar of the dead, the memory of which is fêted by every family at this time.

Presents exchanged at the year end, generally begun in the middle of December and continued to the last minute of the old year, are called "seibo," or "year-end presents," and are probably the most important of all. The *seibo* represents the giver's sense of gratitude for the honour or favour received in fancy or in fact during the year, and his wish for the continuance of the same in the new year. In case the *seibo* is omitted, it may be made up by *toshidama*.



Good luck! (Tarō San proudly leaves for his primary school)



Autumn sunshine and shadow

These form the three major present-making seasons of the year which furnish convenient opportunities for mending the omissions made at other times, knowingly or unknowingly. Excuses for present-making are never wanting. They are in fact so numerous that you cannot help omitting or neglecting them sometimes, but the more serious of these omissions, if they prey on your conscience, may be easily rectified at the New Year or Bon season.

All Events Worthy of Presents

After the three seasons above mentioned come the well-known annual festivals of the Girls' Festival of March, the Boys' Festival of May, the Children's Kimono Festival of November, and, you may add, the new festivity of Christmas. One strong cause of the permanent place these festivals have acquired in Japanese life is that they are encouraged through the custom of present-making. One having no intention to celebrate such festivals may find himself obliged to do so by the sheer force of presents pouring into his hands.

Birth, death and marriage are, of course, among the most important events from the viewpoint of making presents. But they are symbolic of numerous other events, both joyous and sad, such as promotions and windfalls or failures and calamities. Birthdays are remembered, of course. Old persons are fêted at 61, 77, 88, 90, etc.

If your child enters a school, it is a congratulatory and present-worthy event at home, and is treated as such by your friends and relatives. If he is graduated, still more so. Should he enter army barracks at twenty, he and you are congratulated in as joyous a manner as when

he returns home after two years' service with the colours. If he gets a job, or promotion, he will receive presents from his happy relatives.

If you have built a house of your own, or opened a shop, that is, of course, big news in your career, on which both your approving betters and envious inferiors will congratulate you with auspicious presents. Even mere removal is often made an occasion for congratulation, it being interpreted as a change for the better. When you start on a long journey, the present is called "*senbetsu*," or "parting cash," which in former days was of the nature of sympathetic contribution toward the expenses of a journey, travel being treated more as occasion of sorrow than of joy; but nowadays the *senbetsu* has changed its old significance into one of joyous congratulations, as when one starts upon an honourable commission in a foreign country.

Presents as Charity

Occasions for sympathy and condolence as opportunities of present-making are also numerous. Death elicits presents in money and in kind, and, while these may prove of no small assistance in conducting the funeral where the family are poor, there are cases where the family is thought to be wealthy, and the presents received come very much short of what is to be spent in return presents. In some provincial districts funerals, especially those of old persons, are made occasions for grand feasting continuing for days to "dissipate the sorrow," and which sometimes make a very serious drain on the coffers of the bereaved. In winter, when farmers have nothing better to do, they find in funerals of well-off families opportunities of enjoying

sumptuous feasts in return for the nominal *kōden* ("price of incense") they bring. If the bereaved family should pretend to be "civilized" and stint giving the three-day feasting before and after the funeral, they will probably have earned an eternal notoriety for being "stingy." There are cases where some alleged rural magnates have gone bankrupt over the funerals of their relatives.

There is an old aphorism concerning the presents to be given to those whose houses have been burned or washed away by flood or tidal waves: "Give fire to victims of fire and water to victims of water." The first thing those burnt out will want are a shelter and a fireplace where they may cook and warm themselves, so that braziers and charcoals and other warming materials will be welcome, and those in flooded districts will stand in want of clean water to drink, so that pails and other water vessels may prove most helpful, whereas other probably more expensive articles may prove burdensome in such emergencies.

We are reminded of a famous *waka*, which runs: "Many are the people who will come and praise the cherry trees in bloom, but truly kind are they who visit them after the blossoms are shed." It is part of human nature, perhaps, to rejoice with the joyful and to bring more to those who already have while leaving pain and sorrow to suffer in solitude. But in the Japanese scheme of present-making the pretexts are so numerous and ever-present that you will never lack an opportunity of sympathizing with sorrow or of relieving suffering, if only you have the intention, without placing your recipient under the humiliation of a debtor or causing any other moral offense.

Attempt to Escape

There are many people, increasing in number with the increasing population, who find too much bother in the restrictions and obligations of family life, and take to the so-called simpler mode of life in the "apart" (a short form for "apartment house"). Such houses are being built everywhere in great numbers. In the "apart" one is free to come and go and to act just as one pleases, which seems the very essence of emancipated life, and there has been a steady exodus of young persons of both sexes from the shackles of family life to take to the life "apart."

But there is a sort of reaction to this exodus. Or it may be regarded as a counter-current flowing in the opposite direction at the same time. This life in the "apart," while it has its freedom, has also its darker side in the absence of the protecting wings which the home affords. Cut off from the society of neighbours, often friends and kinsmen, their occupants must, when trouble occurs, solve it by themselves or among themselves without outside counsel. As they grow older, they increasingly feel the "barrenness and loneliness" of such a life, and begin, like the prodigal son, to think of their parental home far away. So there are as many people anxious to get out of home life as those anxious to return to it, because they miss "the old familiar faces." It is a significant fact that just as apartments are increasing in and out of every large city, so also are increasing at an amazing rate the small homesteads, of three to four or five rooms, near the boundaries of Greater Tokyo, fit for young householders of limited means, or so-called young salaried men and salaried women.



